

# STATIST ISLAM AND FOLK ISLAM

## Ethnohistory and Muslim Practices in Bantaeng

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### *Abstract:*

El-Zein and Asad proposed theoretical approaches to understand Muslim societies. Many later anthropologists welcomed and criticised their proposal. Ideally, how should Muslim societies be anthropologically approached? How should localities of Islam be comprehended? To give a partial answer to these questions, I turn to my ethnographic and historical fieldwork in Bantaeng, eastern Indonesia, to show how it should ideally work. This paper examines the way anthropologists ideally react to the study of Islam and Muslims. This includes several issues that will be made as case studies in this paper. By exploring the ideas of folk and statist Islam[s], tomb visit, Bugis within Makassar, and some other. This paper will be ended with a recommendation on the proposed prospective way-out of how anthropologists observes Muslim societies.

### **Introduction**

Ethnohistory was initially a reaction of many anthropologists when they dealt with history of people under study. This became more complicated when anthropologists had to explore stories and 'history' told by informants. It is very common that people understand always tell stories or legends that they believe as historical, factual and happened in the past. This is really a serious problem when historians are forced to

examine these kinds of history. At the same time, anthropologists have to listen and appreciate those stories without putting any value judgements.

To demonstrate how anthropologists ideally react to these stories, they invented the so-called ethnohistory. They even ended up with several technical terms cross-referencing each other. This includes 'ethnohistory', 'anthropological history', 'historical ethnography', 'specific history', 'folk story', or even 'ethno- ethnohistory'. This is basically the way out of anthropologists when examining folk stories told by people under studies. Sturtevant defines 'ethnohistory' as "...history of people normally studied by anthropologists" (1966: 6-7). Meanwhile Krech proposes a good definition of 'anthropological history' as combination of method and theory current in history and anthropology, and the focus on history or historiography in or of some ethnic groups (1997: 161). Similarly, Krech also explains 'historical ethnography' as a timeless or synchronic reconstruction of a culture or society at some past time (1997: 161).

Meanwhile, 'specific history' is understood as diachronic historical study of a specific society of ethnic group written either downstream or upstream directions. The former refers to most recent stories to the earliest ones, while conversely, the latter starts from the earliest to the most recent ones (Krech 1997: 161). Similarly, 'folk history' has been defined as historiography as conceptualised by people in a particular, usually non-literate, society. In this last context, Fogelson coins another similar term which is 'ethno-ethnohistory' (1989: 134).

## Statist and Folk Islam

Another aspect of ethnohistory of Islam in South Sulawesi is the story of the advent of Islam. The earliest account of the coming of Islam is the arrival of Jamaluddin al-Akbar al-Husain (1310–1453) in South Sulawesi in the fourteenth century. Although his tomb located is in Tosora Wajo, there is no local nor international historian who supports this story. People who believe in this story are those identified Hadramis who have a genealogical relationship with Jamaluddin al-Akbar. Hadrami pilgrims from Malaysia who claim to be the descendants of Jamaluddin al-Akbar visit the tomb in Tosora annually.

Jamaluddin al-Akbar is a prototype of *ulama* who focused his religious missions for the grassroots people. He initially called people to join his martial arts group and other practices. He introduced *langgara* (M.) or *langkara* (B.) to people as a folk game of martial arts. When people became interested, he introduced Islam little by little. There is no reliable account reporting that he converted a ruler to Islam. Yet, there is one report that he converted a ruler called Maddusila to Islam in 1337, but there is no historical evidence that supports this report. He arrived in Barru and stayed in Tosora till he died in 1453.

Sayyid Ba'alwi Syekh Keramat (d. 1675) and Jalaluddin al-Aidid are two *ulama* who spent many years and died in South Sulawesi on Islamic missions. Both did not approach surrounding rulers or kingdoms to convert to Islam. Sayyid Ba'alwi married a royal woman and was trusted to hold the dynasty, but he refused and focused on the Islamic mission. In Bantaeng, Syekh Pakkalimbungang, Syekh Tumbol Gani and Syekh Ja'far are among *ulamas* who had a similar inclination to Sayyid Ba'alwi and al-Aidid. They stayed and disseminated Islam to ordinary people. Through this thesis, I employ the term 'folk Islam' to

identify Muslims or *ulama* who orient themselves to work with ordinary people.

On the other hand, there are several *ulama* who oriented their Islamic missions to rulers. They always came first to the local authorities as the main object of their mission. This is a strategic plan, as once a ruler received Islam, all the people and followers will do so. It means that Islam would become the official religion of the kingdom whose ruler had converted to Islam. I employ the term 'statist Islam' for *ulama* who made political authorities the main object of their Islamic mission. In the case of South Sulawesi, the Three Dato and all Kali (Judge) might represent this inclination of *ulama* who focused their attention on the source of political power. In the Bantaeng case, I mention Dato ri Tiro, Syekh Nurun Baharuddin, Sultan Adam and other Islamic officials as *ulama* in this group.

Folk Islam and statist Islam are two orientations that are always found exist in any processes of Islamisation. In the modern context, there is always a group of Muslims who orient Islam to the state. This means that Islam has to be the official religion; Islam has to manifest in any level of life of the state; Islam has to be embodied in the form of rules and constitutions on the basis of the Qur'an and Hadis; and Islamic law must be officially implemented. The ultimate objective of this group is the formation of an Islamic state, although I believe that not all Muslims in this 'statist' group would have this idea. On the other hand, folk Islam and its proponents do not take Islam to the state or political authorities; they simply orient their missions to ordinary people; they simply make Islam the cultural power of society. In brief, folk Islam does not insist that Islam has to start from politics.

## The Introduction of Islam in Bantaeng

The introduction of Islam in this area can be traced by identifying places that apparently refer to Muslim communities. Place names are helpful in tracing the presence of Islam, as they may refer to regions and languages associated with Islam. In Bantaeng, there were Jambi and Surabaya. The former may refer to a Malay Muslim community, while the latter may indicate a Javanese Muslim one (Mahmud et al. 2007: 148–49). According to Mahmud *et al.*, the latter can be connected to a town in East Java that initially appeared in Trowulan epigraphy (1280 Saka = 1358 AD). Surabaya was a place in coastal East Java where Sunan Ampel or Raden Rahmat, a famous Muslim propagator in the fourteenth century, established a *pesantren* (Mahmud *et al.* 2007: 149). Surabaya (Bougas 1998: 86) is today located near the coast of Pa'jukukang between Lumpangan/Katapang and Nipa-Nipa. I talked with some locals aged between 30 and 40, but none realised that their place was called Soerabaja; only a few elders used to know the place as Soerabaja. It is currently called Bombong or Perumputan which is now located in Desa Nipa-Nipa.

Another way to detect the presence of Islam in the region is to notice when it was acknowledged by political authorities. Due to the availability of sources, as well as their credibility, most historical writings rely on this model. The arrival of Islam is usually marked by a ruler's conversion and the declaration that Islam is the religion of the kingdom. Mahmud *et al.* argue that this framework is the best way to determine the coming of Islam in Bantaeng for two reasons. The first is because it makes it easier to look at the Islamisation processes in the context of the nation or archipelago; and second, much archaeological evidence supports this framework, or supports what is found in manuscripts (Mahmud *et al.* 2007: 149).

Scholars such as Sewang (2003) and Pelras (1996) generally acknowledge that the dissemination of Islam in Bugis and Makassar societies in South Sulawesi cannot be separated from the role of Gowa (Sewang 2003: 97–123, though the first South Sulawesi ruler who converted to Islam is said to be the ruler of Luwu. As explained somewhere the ruler of Luwu, La Patiware is said to have embraced Islam on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1605. After much difficulty with interpreting the sources, most scholars now agree that Karaeng Matoaya of Tallo [Sultan Abdullah] and Sultan Alauddin of Gowa embraced Islam on 22 September 1605 (Noorduyn 1956; Sewang 2003: 106). It is widely acknowledged that Gowa used Islam to dominate South Sulawesi. The Islamisation of South Sulawesi by Gowa is broadly known as *Musu Selleng*, or Islamic war. Gowa called its allies to adhere to Islam.

Its allies included small kingdoms within the ethnically Makassar area. According to some sources, one of reasons for Gowa waging *Musu Selleng* was an agreement among South Sulawesi kingdoms that “anyone who found a better path is to be conscientious to advise other allied rulers” (Mattulada 1983: 230). Bantaeng, together with Sawitto, Balanipa and Selayar, was said to peacefully accept the call in 1607. The first Bantaeng ruler who converted to Islam was Karaeng Ma’jombea Matinroe ri Jalanjang, the 10<sup>th</sup> ruler, and he was then immediately followed by the royal family and the people of Bantaeng (Pelras 1996: 137; Sewang 2005: 112-113).

The pattern of Islamisation in Bantaeng is not as clear as in other areas in South Sulawesi. There is a shortage of reliable literature describing the coming of Islam in Bantaeng. Literature

dealing with the early process shows several versions regarding sequence, people, place and description. Oral sources which have not been well documented have not been well analysed by authors. Bahri (1990), for example, was one of the first local authors who collected information from oral sources, but didn't effectively process and analyse the data.

Working from oral sources, Mahmud et al. (2007: 150) said that Karaeng Ma'jombea was converted to Islam by Syekh Nurun Baharuddin Tajul Naqsyabandiyah who was also known as Tutettea ri Erea (the man who walks on the water). They reported that Nurun Baharuddin was sent by Sultan Alauddin of Gowa to Islamise Bantaeng in 1607. According to Mahmud *et al.*, another early Muslim propagator in Bantaeng was La Tenriruwa Sultan Adam, the 11<sup>th</sup> ruler of Bone, who embraced Islam in 1611. As his call for conversion to Islam was initially rejected by the people of Bone and the Ada' Pitue (council of seven), he moved to Makassar to learn Islam. In 1615, he was granted land in Bantaeng where he spread Islam and founded an Islamic educational institution called Nahdhatut Thawalib. As he died in Bantaeng, his *anumerta* name is Matinroe ri Bantaeng (who died in Bantaeng).

Based on these stories, they then rejected the view that Islam in Bantaeng was initially brought by Datu' ri Tiro (2007: 151).<sup>1</sup> From these descriptions, Mahmud *et al.* concluded that Nurun Baharuddin and Sultan Adam were the first propagators of Islam in Bantaeng.

Badruzzaman (2008) told a story that is rarely found in other sources. According to him, when the Three Dato' dispersed to disseminate Islam in all South Sulawesi regions, Dato' ri Tiro called at Selayar and Bira and successfully converted the ruler of

Gattarang in Selayar (Sultan Daeng Raja) and the ruler of Tiro (Launru Daeng Biasa) to Islam in 1603 and 1604 respectively. Dato' ri Tiro then visited Bantaeng for the same purpose, but the ruler of Bantaeng had not yet converted.

Meanwhile, Bahri (1990) recorded some interesting stories. According to these, Dato' Pakkalimbungang arrived and disseminated Islam in Bantaeng. Dato' Pakkalimbungang managed to convert a number of people, including a nephew of the ruler, some years before the ruler himself. On several occasions, the ruler of Bantaeng asked Gowa to send a Muslim scholar to Bantaeng to educate Muslims. The messengers from Bantaeng were Karaeng Caddi (later known as Syeikh Nurun Baharuddin, the nephew of the ruler) and Karaeng Bajeng. The messengers, however, especially Syeikh Nurun Baharuddin, stayed to master Islam in Gowa (Bahri 1990: 38–39). Afterwards, Syeikh Nurun Baharuddin is said to have gone back to Bantaeng and became the first Kali (Muslim Judge) of Bantaeng. He died in 1671 and was buried near Mesjid Tua Tompong (Mesjid Taqwa), which is regularly visited by Muslims (Mahmud et al. 2007: 149–50).

Another source confirms that the official request of Karaeng Ma'jombea, the Bantaeng ruler who converted to Islam, to Gowa to send an *ulama* to teach Islam in Bantaeng (Katu 1982: 32). The Gowa authorities sent Dato' ri Bandang to support the Islamisation process in Bantaeng. The first social and political change was the recognition of Islam in the kingdom structure; Daengta Kaliya (Muslim Judge) was placed at the same level as Sabannara (Harbourmaster), Karaeng Tukajannangang (Army Commander) and Tumailalang Toa (Minister of Home Affairs). In order to prepare Muslim officers for the state, Dato ri Bandang supervised and educated some students. For this purpose, a mosque, that was later called Mesjid Taqwa, the



oldest mosque of Bantaeng, was founded on the eastern side of the palace. After being trained, the officers were sent to rural and remote areas of Bantaeng to supervise Muslims.

### **Datu Pakkalimbungang**

There has not been a reliable biography of Datu' Pakkalimbungang. Bahri wrote an undergraduate thesis at IAIN (now UIN) Alauddin Makassar in 1990. He gained data and information from his key informants living in Bantaeng. This firsthand information is priceless, as at that time, his key informants' ages ranged from 65 to 95 years old and they were the closest sources to the subject. They were, for example, former Pinati or guardians of the tomb of Pakkalimbungang (Sampara), inheritor of Datu' Pakkalimbungang's medical skills (Madi), and other public figures.

Pakkalimbungang is actually the name of a small village in Kecamatan Bissappu. Some people believe Datu Pakkalimbungang was among the first propagators of Islam in Bantaeng. Like the famous Three Datu in South Sulawesi, Datu Pakkalimbungang is reported to have come from Sumatra by way of Luwu (South Sulawesi). He came to Luwu at the invitation of the local ruler. After a while, he moved to Bantaeng (Bahri 1990: 53). The title 'Datu' in front of his name is a strong indicator of his origins in Sumatra. Another version of history reports that he came through Maiwa in Enrekang (Masdoeki 1984: 29).

According to Daeng Guru, the title of the Pinati who maintains the tomb, the Datu's name is Syekh Muhammad Amir. Entering the outer site of the tomb, visitors will notice this name on the information board on the fence. However, according to Sampara, a Pinati of Pakkalimbungang tomb in the 1980s told Bahri (1990) that his name was Saidi Ali, and this

might lead people to think that he was Hadrami, a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad saw. Hadrami descendants have been the principal catalysts for the dissemination of Islam in Southeast Asia, including eastern Indonesia. When it is said that propagators of Islam came from Sumatra or Aceh, in many cases, it was because they were stopover places in their journey to eastern Indonesia. This is the case of later disseminators of Islam in Bantaeng, such as the brothers Sheikh Abdul Gani and Sheikh Muhammad Ja'far, who came from Persia and stopped over in Aceh. With the name Saidi Ali, it is obvious that he is Hadrami. When I asked Daeng Guru, he said, "Yes, he is an Arab." There is, however, no adequate evidence, such as genealogical records and family names, to prove this.

The common historiography shows that the first propagator of Islam in Bantaeng was Datu ri Bandang who started Islamising Bantaeng in 1606. However, Datu Pakkalimbungang arrived and disseminated Islam in Bantaeng, according to one source, seven harvests or seven years before the ruler of Bantaeng, Karaeng Ma'jombea converted and ordered his people to convert to Islam (Bahri 1990:). As Bahri said:

It was far before Karaeng Ma'jombea started running the kingdom. My grandmother told me, never underestimate Datu Pakkalimbungang. His fingers and will were powerful on the will of Allah. He disseminated Islam in Bantaeng before Karaeng Ma'jombea converted to Islam. If I am not wrong, seven harvest seasons after Datu's arrival, the King then ordered his people and customary council members to convert to Islam...(1990:51–52)

Karaeng Ma'jombea was the second ruler at the factual

stratum or the seventh at the fictional one.<sup>2</sup> There is no period of power provided. But if it is compared to Gowa genealogy, it is evident that Karaeng Ma'jombea ruled Bantaeng from the end of the sixteenth century to the early seventeenth century. He converted to Islam in 1606 after his request for Muslim propagators from the Gowa Kingdom, which was ruled by Karaeng Tunipallangga Ulaweng (r. 1546–1565) who sent Datu ri Bandang to Bantaeng. Taking these comparisons into account, it is clear that Datu Pakkalimbungang arrived in Bantaeng at the end of the sixteenth century. There is even a report that Karaeng Rewata, the predecessor of Karaeng Ma'jombea, once met Datu Pakkalimbungang and asked him to help him to solve the problems of the dry season in Bantaeng. If this is true, then I argue, that Datu' Pakkalimbungang is the first Muslim propagator in Bantaeng.

There are several versions of Datu Pakkalimbungang's arrival in Bantaeng. A report by the Office of Historical and Ancient Heritage of South Sulawesi in 1984 mentioned the eighteenth century as the date of his arrival (Masdoeki 1984: 29). Slightly earlier than this, an archaeological excavation by Mahmud and colleagues demonstrated that, by observing Datu Pakkalimbungang's grave, it is estimated that he came between the end of seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century (Mahmud *et al.* 2007: 175). A booklet published by the local Office of Culture and Tourism showed some of his stories occurring in 1912 in Bantaeng (Nastura n.d. 18). This last report shows that his arrival was in the early twentieth century.

Datu Pakkalimbungang's effort to disseminate Islam was not without obstacles. The Bantaeng people's belief in Gods was very strong. But he learnt that mysticism was the key. To attract people's attention, he endeavoured to

demonstrate his spiritual power. He was called 'To Tettea ri Jekne' (M. the man who walks on water). Sampara, as told to Bahri (1990: 52–55), explained that Datu Pakkalimbungang arrived by walking on water, without a boat. He was able to sit on banana leaves in a tree. The most eye-catching one is that he was able to turn the river flow to follow a line he made. He was also able to send rain at the request of the ruler after five years of long, dry seasons. Karaeng Rewata once asked him to help people suffering from famine. The Datu gathered people in a wide field, prayed to ask for help from God. While he was praying, it was raining. After that, people sought him out to ask for help.

The Datu's other skill was to cure people. He taught people how to gather herbal medicine from plants and how to consume it. He changed the way people consumed medicines by beginning with the prayer, "*nasaba' arenna Karaeng Allah Ta'ala*" (M. on the name of Allah). People used to consume it without any prayers. He bequeathed this curing skill to the people of Bantaeng. Madi, a cultural curer in Panai kang-Bantaeng, claimed that he inherited this skill from his father, and grandfather, in a line of descent from Datu Pakkalimbungang (Bahri 1990: 60). The Daeng Guru also confirmed that many people in Bantaeng were interested in and then converted to Islam after dealing with Datu Pakkalimbungang and his expertise in making herbal medicine.<sup>3</sup>

Datu Pakkalimbungang had charismatic authority, which enabled him to influence everyday practices including in agriculture. He asked people to change the way they planted seeds. At the time he came to Bantaeng, when planting crops, the people made offerings to Karaeng Ta'ilikia accompanied by the recitation of Sure' Meong Palo Karallae

(Bahri 1990: 61), an episode of *La Galigo*. The story concerns a three-coloured cat that was badly treated. The cat is said to have belonged to Dewi Sri (the Rice Goddess) who threatened that she would punish people who harmed her pet cat. Reading this story as a ritual prior to planting was believed to avoid poor yields. Datu Pakkalimbungang convinced people that the story could be replaced with the recitation of *Sure' Makkattere'*, a story of the wedding of Abdullah and Aminah, Prophet Muhammad's parents, and the story of the cutting of the hair of the Prophet Muhammad saw. As the Islamic story had been translated, written and recited in Makassarese, it was easy for people to read it. When people asked him about the key figures in the *Sure' Makkattere'*, Datu Pakkalimbungang took the opportunity to propagate Islam and its related teachings. People kept reciting it, as they believed that the yield of their rice increased, and the threat of rice pests was diminished.

According to the stories recorded by Bahri, Datu Pakkalimbungang replaced other local recitations with those associated with Islam. People of Bantaeng used to read *Sangiang*<sup>4</sup> when coming down to the ricefield. After quite a long time, Datu Pakkalimbungang requested people to replace it with the reading of *Barzanji* (the story of the Prophet Muhammad saw.) which had been translated into Makassarese and sung with a beautiful rhythm. He also pioneered what people called *Angngaji Battuang*, the reading and translation of the story of the proposal of an Egyptian princess to Abdullah. He introduced some other Islamic traditions and habits to the people of Bantaeng such as *Baca Pakkalimbungang* and *Assikkiri'*. The former refers to a style of teaching Qur'anic recitation according to the Datu Pakkalimbungang method, while the latter refers to reading *Barzanji* and performing *qasida* (religious songs accompanying *Barzanji*) accompanied by *gandrang*

(Makassarese drums) (Bahri 1990: 42–43). Zainal, a friend of mine in Bantaeng, told me that Muslims in Tompobulu used to read and practice *Assikkiri* every Thursday night. But he and many people I asked, did not know exactly what it was.

Datu Pakkalimbungang's activities targeted ordinary people. However, he was forced to deal with the royal circle as they invited him to meet or to give them advice. On at least two occasions, he was invited by Karaeng Rewata about the problem of the long, dry season and by Karaeng Ma'jombea to advise on Islam. When people began consulting him on life issues, Karaeng Ma'jombea invited him to the palace to discuss his beliefs and faith. Karaeng asked him about interdictions in Islam, and he reluctantly mentioned consuming pork, gambling and drinking. The ruler could not agree with the prohibition, and was not inclined to become Muslim. The ruler, however, realised that his people began converting to Islam in large numbers. Karaeng Ma'jombea then requested Gowa authorities send Muslim preachers to Bantaeng, who then converted him to Islam in 1606 (Bahri 1990).

Daeng Guru, the guardian of the tomb, told me the story of the way Datu Pakkalimbungang died. He told his loyal followers that, as a poor man who had no land, Daeng Toa — another famous name for the Datu — wanted them to bury him one day in the Panaikang River. He was once praying collectively with several people on some big rocks on the Panaikang River. In the last *sujud* (prostration), he did not wake up from kneeling until the people finished their prayer, and tried to wake him up. He died while he was praying, a much-desired death for Muslims. Many Muslims believe that this is a *husn al-kehâtima* or happy ending for a good Muslim. As he died, stories and myths

developed around him. The most striking one is regarding his tomb on the shores of the Panaikang River in Bissappu-Bantaeng. Several former Pinati, the current one, and people around the tomb told me that it has always been safe when the Panaikang River floods, even when the surrounding areas were inundated, most notably in the great flood in 2006. Logically, the flow of the river should flood the tomb. This has encouraged people's assumption of his saintliness.

The tomb is located on the shore of the Panaikang River, 35 metres above sea level in Kalimbungang, Kelurahan Bontosunggu, Kecamatan Bissappu. Coming from Bantaeng town, everyone walks down about 2 kilometres to reach the site. A newcomer would not know the site, as there is no sign indicating the tomb. Coming from the direction of the town of Bantaeng, you turn right at the office of Bissappu sub-district, just before a bridge where the Panaikang River flows down to the sea. Following a dirt path about 600 metres, you arrive at the entrance. To reach the site, visitors get out of their vehicle at the outer fence and walk down about 700 metres. A long, narrow curving brick path has been provided from the parking area to the site. Some people still drive their motorcycles to the site. Occasionally, there are one to two people sitting in a guardhouse at the entrance. People sometimes give them money, either for parking services or an entrance. When I was doing fieldwork in 2007–2008, the Pinati of the tomb was Muhammad Saika. He is more known as Guru Saika. Inviting me to visit him in his house in Desa Cambaloyo, he said, "If you come one day to visit me, ask people in the village about Daeng Guru [me], they all know me and will take you to my house." He did not take the position as Pinati from his father. He was an assistant to the former Pinati, and he appointed his assistant on his left side. He and his assistant receive money from visitors who willingly

give to him, as he serves them with prayers, storytelling and guidance.e ticket.

There is no particular time to visit, nor particular dates related to Datu Pakkalimbungang. This differs markedly from traditions of grave visiting in Jawa, where visits are according to significant dates. According to Daeng Guru, the guardian, he often welcomes more than 100 visitors in a day, especially on Sundays. Visitors are welcome any time, weekdays and especially at weekends. The number of visitors increases in the weeks before Ramadan, the fasting month. Sunday is the best time to visit, simply because it is a regular holiday for the whole family. “Even though we are farmers who can have opportunity to visit any time, children are going to school on the weekdays. So everyone has time to join on Sunday,” said Muhtar, a Sunday pilgrim from Uluere. They often come with extended family members.

The main purpose of the visit is to release a *nasar* (vow) or to fulfil their promise. For the former, they usually have a real-life problem or a of request about their future. Having a large debt, being successful in exams, being accepted as a teacher or civil servant, having a family member who is sick, performing *hajj* to Mecca, are popular issues and reasons to visit the tomb. For those who release *nasar*, they promise that they will come back to visit if Allah gives blessings so those problems are solved. For the latter, their current visit would be at least the second, in order to fulfil promises after their problems are over.

When people visit, they simply sit on the mat provided on the floor to wait for their turn. Then they come forward and sit on the other side of the tomb in front of Daeng Guru. They then tell him the intention of their visit while



spreading small, dominantly green flowers or leaves that they bring, and pouring water on the tomb. The intention may include any life problem they are facing. They sometimes bring a bottle of water (mineral water in many cases) to be prayed on, and then used as a rubbing medicine for any kind of sickness. While burning incense, Daeng Guru recites a particular prayer:

The next step of releasing *nasar* is by tying a thread anywhere around the site. They can bind the rope, or thread, or ribbon of any colour and material on the wires of the fence, tree branches, or any other spots. This is an eye-catching sight around the tomb. Muhtar of Uluere and Daeng Guru said that binding a rope is a sign or — in my words — the materialised pact of agreement between the people and Allah. It symbolises a promise made by a visitor that, if their requests or hopes are answered, they promise to come back to the tomb to remember what *nasar* they released on the site. According to Hamadong, who visited the site after performing *haji*, some people even believe that breaking the promise by not visiting the site after those requests are answered would lead to disaster. The disaster may come in the form of disease or bad luck. Daeng Guru added, however, that binding a thread is not necessary. They simply preserve the on-going tradition, implying that they need a symbol to materialise their promise. A common issue is that, in most cases, people cannot find their own thread among those thousands tied there. The tradition conventionally requests that they have to untie their own rope when they come back to visit.

### **Bugis within Makassar**

Bantaeng in general and Tompobulu in particular are populated predominantly by Makassarese. People of Bantaeng mostly identify themselves as speakers of Konjo, the eastern dialect or accent of the Makassar language.

However, there are also clusters of Bugis residing within Tompobulu, especially in the settlements of Banyorang and Ereng-Ereng. These settlements are unusual as Bantaeng is to the east of the traditional Bugis homeland, while Bugis migrants have tended to migrate to the relatively more prosperous areas to the west. The Wajo are famous for an expression, *la patu muita melle' laopo sompe' ri tana Bare'* (you will have a good destiny when you wander to the West). The influx of the Bugis to Bantaeng ought to be viewed in the context of large-scale Bugis migrations beginning in the seventeenth century. As well as settling in Bantaeng, Bugis migrants historically ventured to Samarinda (Kalimantan), Java, Sumatra and Malaysia. Scholars have suggested a number of reasons for these migrations including local wars and the notion of *siri'* —a complex cultural idea involving aspects of self-dignity and personal honour.

A major influx of Bugis to Bantaeng occurred as early as 1608, when La Tenriruwa, the eleventh ruler of Bone, was granted land in Bantaeng by Sultan Alauddin (d. 1639), the thirteenth ruler of Gowa, as recognition for his cooperation with the Makassar twin kingdom of Gowa-Tallo. La Tenriruwa is considered the first Bone ruler to convert to Islam; the people of Bone rejected his call to convert to the new faith, and La Tenriruwa moved to Pattiro and eventually to Makassar to deepen his understanding of Islam under the supervision of Datu ri Bandang. La Tenriruwa spent the rest of his life in Bantaeng and was posthumously named La Tenriruwa *Matinroe ri Bantaeng* (who died in Bantaeng). The arrival in Bantaeng of Bugis from Bone under La Tenriruwa has led some scholars to suggest this was the origin of the entire Bugis population in Bantaeng, including the Bugis of Tompobulu. Daeng Rusle, a local researcher, takes this view and also insists that the Bugis community in Tompobulu is comprised mainly of La

Tenriruwa's descendants. I encountered a civil servant in Bantaeng who also used the story of La Tenriruwa to argue for this perspective.

Bugis residents of Tompobulu, however, trace their own origins largely to Wajo, not Bone. The Wajo are famous for their wandering mentality. Some scholars have acknowledged that the Wajo is a Bugis sub-ethnic group who mostly left their homeland to wander for many reasons. Benjamin J. Matthes once compared the mentality of the Bugis of Bone, Wajo and Soppeng. The Bone, he contended, tended to be farmers, the Soppeng wished to be seekers of knowledge, the Makassar-Gowa liked waging war, while the Wajo were inclined to be entrepreneurs. Zainal Abidin also once quoted a comparison in which the Wajo were destined to be rich, or that the Bone liked to govern, the Soppeng tended to be civil servants, while the Wajo were talented in trade. There is also a famous expression, '*aja' naita bati' napeppeng toGowa, nalewo toBone, nabalu' toWajo, narappa toSidendreng*' suggesting that it is extremely hard if we are hunted by the Gowa, besieged by the Bone, sold by the Wajo, and robbed by the Sidrap. That was the reason why in the past, the Wajo were widely known as the Chinese of the Bugis for their skill in trade. One of the best ways to apply their trade skill was by wandering somewhere, especially to the West. John Crawford once acknowledged that there were about three thousand Wajo in Singapore in the nineteenth century. This fact led him to argue that the enterprising mentality belonged mostly to the Wajo. Jacqueline A. Linetone also argued that the Wajo enjoyed the longest tradition of migration.

Some informants, aged between fifty and fifty-five years, reported that the first generation of Bugis from Wajo to migrate to Tompobulu-Bantaeng included their own

grandparents. This suggests that Wajo Bugis initially came to the area as late as the second half of the nineteenth century. Historically, Bugis migration tended to occur in large groups led by one or several nobles each with loyal followers and extended families. Patron-client relationships were very strong among South Sulawesi people. The first group of Bone Bugis to settle in the district capital of Bantaeng reflected this general pattern. However, the practice followed by Wajo Bugis in migrating to Tompobulu was quite different, involving family by family migration.

According to one informant, H. Zubair, the first Wajo Bugis family to migrate to Tompobulu included the brothers La Mude, Cipu and Rema, along with their extended family, who had heard about the fertility of Tompobulu land. They then moved to Tompobulu and bought lands from the local Makassar on which to plant coffee and cocoa. After this, news of the fertility of Tompobulu soil spread among the Bugis in Wajo. Those who initially migrated to this area invited other families to Wajo, buying land from local Makassars (who reputedly used the proceeds for gambling). In time, a great number of Wajo Bugis arrived in Tompobulu where they remain to this day. Another informant, H. Bada Aming (56) stated that his grandparents and family migrated because of an ongoing and longstanding local conflict in Wajo. Despite belonging to a large and wealthy family, local political instability forced their departure. While initially desiring to remain in Wajo, members of their extended family reported finding a good location at Tompobulu, prompting the decision to migrate permanently to Bantaeng where they too purchased land in Tompobulu for cultivating coffee and cocoa.

Importantly, people migrating to other places bring cultural practices and forms of knowledge along with their physical presence, at least initially. Until the 1980s, all Bugis in this area spoke Bugis as the language of day-to-day communication, using Indonesian or Makassarese when speaking to Makassar people. Today, only the older generations of Bugis in Tompobulu still speak Bugis. Bugis children in Tompobulu grow up with the Makassar language, which is taught in Bantaeng's schools. In addition to a local Indonesian vernacular the younger generations speak Makassarese most of the time, although many continue to understand Bugis. Asnawi (33) and Saliha (33) are a couple in Tompobulu who are both Bugis by origin. Asnawi, who was also my host during my research, always spoke in Makassarese to his wife who in turn always replied in Bugis.

Despite historical hostilities between Bugis and Makassar polities, the Bugis community in Tompobulu lives peacefully within the indigenous Makassar society. The older generation I talked with during fieldwork did not describe any tensions existing between the two ethnic groups. In their account, the Bugis came with their money and simply followed local rules within the majority Makassar community. The only social tension existing in Tompobulu, according to my informants, involved modernist Muslims represented by Muhammadiyah and traditionalist ones represented by As'adiyah (NU) concerning a range of specific theological issues.

What I have explored above are some examples of how local Muslim elites translate and interpret Islamic sources to be in accordance with local practices. Conversely, the local elites have been successful in guiding local practices to

be in accordance with Islamic principles and teachings. Their religious and cultural knowledge has provided a reliable capital for them to serve rural Muslims around them. Their proficiency in Islamic tradition and knowledge has led them to either support or reject particular local practices by Muslims in the village.

Now, let us return to Islamic Anthropology who make use Redfield's dichotomy of Great and Little traditions and Asad's concept of discursive tradition. Both concepts have been 'employed' to draw attention to the role of religious elites in schools or urban areas as the only authoritative persons in terms of orthodoxy have the right to translate and interpret Islam. They wittingly or unwittingly neglect the important role of local religious elites who have reliable proficiency in interpreting Islam.

The local examples I have provided here showed that not all local and popular practices in villages can be regarded as little tradition in Redfield's conception, or unauthorised in Asad's explanation. Muslims in villages also have particular religious elites who will defend them in terms of local Islamic practices. Indeed, none has the right to say, or more exactly, judge and undermine the Islamic proficiency of local religious elites, as they have learned Islam and Arabic from 'authentic' Islamic education institutions. In other words, local religious leaders somehow represent great tradition.

In this context, I would like to argue that we need to appreciate a local interpretation of Islam offered by local religious elites in villages. I would argue that we need to acknowledge the plural religious authorities within Muslim

societies. Most Muslims may acknowledge the absence of a single authority in Islam. Each Muslim has the right to pick a particular Imam or religious elites that they trust. This also has proved the polyvocal character (Messick 1988: 637) of Islam, that Islam has many faces.

Bowen (2012) has introduced why we need such refurbished approaches in understanding Muslim societies. He proposes that “Islam is best seen as a set of interpretive resources and practices” (Bowen 2012: 3). He went further by defining what he calls the New Anthropology of Islam as “the insistence that the analysis begins with individual’s efforts to grapple with those resources and shape those practices in meaningful way” (Bowen 2012: 3). In different expressions, he proposed two complementary analytical strategies to understand Islam and Muslim societies: “focusing inward” by scrutinising personal testimonies and histories, and opening outward” by discovering the social significance of Islamic practices. In this regard, he provided three levels of analysis, starting from theology (unpacking basic features of Islamic religious life), history (discovering processes that generate diversity) and the new anthropology of Islam (comparative perspective) (Bowen 2012: 3–4).

I would argue that Bowen’s argument can be closely linked to Asad’s notion of discursive tradition that, according to him, will discover the continuation of ideas that link one Islamic practice to another in a different place. Bowen’s proposal principally requires a standard familiarity of an anthropologist to Islamic theology. This will force the anthropologist to spend more time understanding the theology of Islam. Yet, it is useful and very helpful for an anthropologist to understand Islam and Muslim societies. It

is really a great advantage for anthropologists to be compared with those who are not familiar with Islam. However, anthropologists are actually dealing with the people, Muslims or Muslim societies, not with Islam as a set of ideas or norms. I would idealise Evans-Pritchard's study of Muslim society, which is the adheres of Sanusiya Sufi Order in Lybia. With his limited understanding of Islam, he could show what is actually practised by Muslims in Cyrenaica, Libya.

Anthropology of Islam involves an ontological problem. Anthropologists do not observe Islam as a set of norms and teachings. They observe people, culture and practices instead. In this regard, I re-emphasise the ideal term that can be commonly used for anthropological studies of Muslims and Muslim society. I would suggest the term 'anthropology of Muslim societies' for all anthropological observations of Muslims and Muslim societies. The term 'Islamic anthropology' is more problematic and awkward, as it contains pejorative value judgments of other practices by Muslims.